

Library Service to **LABOR**

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FROM THE LABOR PRESS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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LIBRARIES IN LABOR UNIONS

The American Library Association's Conference of last summer, in Washington, D.C., provided opportunity for three Joint Committee members to call several labor unions asking for information about their libraries, and to visit two such libraries. Dorothy Oko, Esther Hughes, and Roberta McBride spent a very pleasant morning visiting the headquarters of the State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and their efficient, capably staffed library. A briefer visit was made that afternoon to the library at the headquarters of the International Association of Machinists. Information gathered on the two libraries has been arranged under the headings 1) Authority, 2) Services, 3) Staff, 4) Materials, 5) Archival functions, 6) Other responsibilities.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

- 1) The AFSCME Research Library established at the AFSCME headquarters in 1942 grew as a part of the Civil Service and Research Department until August, 1959, when it became an independent department.
- 2) It provides services for all staff members in the building and service to field personnel and local unions. Requests from locals for book loans are always handled by recommending use of their local public library. The staff members making heaviest demands are Research, Education, Organizational, and Civil Service Counsel.
- 3) The Library is the only known union library having two library school trained staff members: Mrs. Pia Lenart, and Mrs. Helen Allan. The third staff member, Mrs. Petronella Bolle, though lacking formal library science training, has a most useful labor background. The library trained staff members had had no actual previous labor experience despite their strong personal interest in the union movement.
- 4) The collection is strong in the field of public administration and has comparative material from each of the states and from other levels of government on civil service, labor laws, social security, pensions, group insurance, health and welfare, and government employees' salaries. It has publications from many federal agencies, as Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics; and there is much material on labor relations in both public agencies and private industry. The library regularly receives 300 periodicals, many of which are received on a complimentary or exchange basis in return for AFSCME publications. The book collection consists of 1800 separate volumes. The vertical files contain 24,000 items in the form of pamphlets, documents, laws, research studies and surveys, salary schedules, reports, and current economic and statistical data of federal, state, municipal, and county governments.
- 5) The Library's responsibility for union archives extends to the maintenance of a permanent file on all research studies, surveys, legislative drafts, comments, and analyses prepared by AFSCME over a wide variety of subjects; to abstracting and indexing the correspondence of the different departments for future reference; and to maintaining a permanent, up-to-date vertical file on all subjects pertinent to AFSCME objectives.
- 6) Its other responsibilities include preparation of bibliographies, sending of accession lists at intervals to department heads, indexing and clipping periodical articles of special interest, and extending the use of the library to outside students and researchers in the public administration field.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS

- 1) The Library operates under the Research Department. For example, although it receives order suggestions from the Research, Education, and Publications Departments, the Research Director gives final approval on book orders.
- 2) The Library provides service to the departments listed above, and, although a separate law collections is maintained outside the Library, is often used by the Legal Staff. Answers to questions received from local lodges usually include suggestions for use of local public libraries, or borrowing from the State Library.
- 3) The two librarians, Mrs. Irma Coverston and Mrs. Dorothy Evans, do not have formal library science training. The Library was organized in 1951, and operated for six months under the direction of Abe Kalisch, now in charge of the library for the post graduate school of the U.S. Navy. For some time afterward he offered advisory service, and the staff still refers to him for occasional advice.
- 4) No information received.
- 5-6) The Library is not responsible for union archives, although the staff is temporarily helping in the selection of union records for microfilming; it occasionally does proof reading jobs also. A rather complete catalog, consisting of Library of Congress cards, is maintained. The usual policy is to catalog all publications over twenty pages. The Library maintains a routing system on magazines, and this, together with other reminders of library service, has resulted in a steady increase in library use. Among the Library's enthusiastic supporters is Gordon Cole, editor of the Machinist.

ARIZONA STATE, AFL-CIO

The Arizona State, AFL-CIO, after many months of preparation, officially opened its book and film library service in April, 1959.

The book library, which has more than 5,000 pieces of literature and books, covers subjects such as automation; apprenticeship programs; arbitration techniques; bank statistics; constitutions; state government; national government; civil rights; child labor laws; civil defense; collective bargaining procedures; credit unions; community service programs; education in labor; insurance education; higher education; electronics; economics; elections; ethical practices; foreign aid; grievance procedures; guaranteed annual wage; health program; highway safety programs; labor history; labor trades history; labor leaders' history; Arizona history; political history; health and welfare insurance plans in crafts and industrial unions, plus others; history of Arizona's Indians; industrial development in our great city and state as well as in the nation; prevention of juvenile delinquency; labor-management relations; many international union magazines; minimum wage laws; mining laws and programs; newsletters on labor education, political, legislation, health; NLRB; organizational programs for unions; convention proceedings of state, national and international conventions; public relations in labor and other; programs for the physically handicapped in the state and nation; private and public power; parliamentary procedure; pension plans for labor and others; picketing; right-to-work; social security; strikes; socialism; shop stewards; occupation safety; various forms of taxation; Taft-Hartley; United Nations; unemployment insurance; union label; veterans' programs

and laws; workmen's compensation in Arizona and throughout the nation; welfare programs; wage indexes and studies; world affairs; water problems in Arizona; women workers' laws, and many others which may or may not pertain to labor. We even have books in our library pertaining to the NAM's position and views on various matters.

Almost every piece of material has been cross-indexed once and many as often as six times in order to have a complete and proper information or research bureau. We realize that many omissions and additions will have to be made from time to time, however, we are very happy with the up-to-date results of the library.

The Arizona State, AFL-CIO furnished each affiliated local union with a complete cross-index listing of all materials at hand. Each piece of material or book, of course, has a card pocket and a card in it with the name of the material or book, its author and/or publishers, a space for the borrower's name, date checked out and date returned, and the original coding of such material for easy filing when returned. Each book and piece of material, of course, has a coding printed on it.

Members from local unions away from city headquarters may request any book and it will be mailed to them at a very nominal cost to the state organization because of its metered mail postage machine and its bulk rate permit.

Central labor bodies in our state have been requested to check out 10 or 20 books per month on a rotating basis so that union members in each locality may have the privilege of using this service to know more about the movement they are a great part of.

The film library consists of: "We the People," "Union Democracy," "The Shop Steward," "The Grievance," "With These Hands," "The Fourth Battle of Winchester," "Watch for Joe," "Prices, Paychecks and Prosperity," and "You Can Win Elections."

The rental fee on films is \$3.00 per showing with a two-week advance request specification. The \$3.00 fee is being used for repairing films and purchasing additional films for the film library. Usage of our film library indicates the great need of having at least a small labor film library in each state.

The Arizona State, AFL-CIO is very proud of these two programs as we feel that their value will surpass many other educational attempts.

Lisa Bernardino
Education Committee
Arizona State, AFL-CIO
AFL-CIO Library, Phoenix

Editor's note:

A description of the Arizona AFL-CIO Library appears also in the December, 1959 issue of the AFL-CIO Education News and Views.

TEXAS STATE AFL-CIO

Our organization has accumulated a collection of books which might modestly be called a "library." This collection presently numbers only about 1200 volumes. It is devoted primarily to books on labor topics, but has a fair sprinkling of volumes dealing with economics, sociology, and history.

This collection was originally started by the Texas State Federation of Labor prior to the merger of our two state bodies. The Library was chartered by the Secretary of State of Texas. It was launched as a program whereby the local unions in the state could contribute volumes to commemorate the death of members. Such contributed volumes were marked with a book plate naming the individual being commemorated and the contributing organization was given an attractive certificate acknowledging their actions. Following the merger, this program has not been revived, but we presently plan to do so. We have added to our collection out of our own budget each month.

The use made of the Library is rather limited to our own needs. However, we have drawn on it heavily to loan volumes to students from the neighboring University of Texas who approach us with questions on labor. The collection is, of course, available to any of our members or affiliated organizations who wish to draw on it.

The collection is marked and classified in accordance with the Dewey decimal system for library classification. We maintain a card file to facilitate the location of the particular volumes. We expect the collection to grow considerably in years to come.

I might mention that one library service we have established and maintained is somewhat unique. Since our primary interest is with legislative matters, we have for the last ten years maintained perhaps the most complete cross reference on all bills introduced in the Texas Legislature that is available in our state. This collection includes not only copies of all bills introduced, whether passed or not, but is cross-filed as to subject, authorship, and the legislative committee handling the bill. We receive many requests from individuals both in and out of the labor movement for information contained in this file. In years to come, we plan to emphasize more and more the collection of political data in this office.

Fred H. Schmidt
Secretary-Treasurer
Texas State AFL-CIO

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WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE

The 1959 convention of the AFL-CIO passed the following resolution:

"Resolved: That the AFL-CIO recommends that all affiliated unions cooperate fully with responsible institutions such as historical societies, public and special libraries, universities and university libraries, engaged in the promotion of labor history, with the objective of maintaining the aforementioned historical records, encouraging modern practices in their preservation and service and arranging for their ultimate disposition when no longer current, in suitable institutions of learning."

This is a long step forward in the struggle for the preservation of labor records which began with John R. Commons at the turn of the century. Commons and his students spent twelve years searching through attics, cellars, and libraries for original source material to write "The History of Labor in the United States." With few exceptions, every labor historian since has faced the same formidable task.

The records he needs have been lost or destroyed. A retiring officer may have taken his records with him, his successor may have destroyed them, or they may have been discarded to make way for later ones. The result has been that "Organized labor's long fight to improve the living standards of its members has not been accorded its rightful recognition in American History." (AFL-CIO Resolution).

History can be written from the printed proceedings, officers' reports, and other items which have found their way into libraries. Union newspapers sometimes help, too, but if the history is to be more than a skeleton, the historian needs correspondence, minutes of meetings, and other data that is seldom found.

Labor needs the historian, too, for he has an analytical mind, a sincere interest in his subject, and a background of historical information which he can use in evaluating events. He can paint a total picture of the forces which contribute to specific incidents.

Labor can profit from this analysis in the conduct of its own affairs. Since history has a way of repeating itself, the union leader can use the historian's summary as a framework for analyzing current problems. It may well include factors he has failed to consider.

An objective union history would be a useful tool in training future union leaders, for it would present both failures and successes in perspective without criticism or blame. It is only human to dwell upon our successes and minimize our failures, but we learn from our failures, too.

Today, organized labor is faced with an unfavorable climate, because the general public has heard much about labor's errors and excesses and little about its positive contributions. Any attempt to correct this impression, if made by labor, is likely to be viewed by the general public with suspicion. The historian, on the other hand, is concerned only with telling his story accurately and impartially, in a setting which permits the reader to appreciate the accomplishments and to understand the errors. His words are accepted by an audience labor can not hope to reach by itself.

Ideally, an organization should preserve its own records; but this requires a suitable place for preserving them, a staff trained to recognize what should be preserved, and a continuity of administration which labor does not have. How much better it would be if the documents and papers could be turned over to an institution which has a staff trained in the techniques of organizing, preserving, and servicing them.

Obviously there will be some information which the union would consider confidential, perhaps because it reveals their strategy or may reflect upon the character of individuals still living. Archival institutions are prepared to put this kind of thing in storage for whatever period seems necessary.

The union may still retain some control over records it places in an institution by placing restrictions on who may use them and by requiring that any publications resulting from their use be submitted to the union for prior review. Any sincere historian would have no objection to this procedure. First, because the union people may make suggestions and corrections which improve the manuscript. Obviously, in a telephone age, many decisions which influence the policy of an organization are never written down, and the historian must rely on the memory of the individuals involved. Secondly, the historian would soon be denied access to all records if he antagonized everyone in the process.

In the last few years at least two groups outside of specific institutions have been active in a movement to see that the papers of trade unions are preserved. The Trade Union Committee of the Society of American Archivists has been trying to draw up a list of labor records which are held by various institutions. This will include papers in universities, state libraries, historical associations, and the trade unions themselves. Once this list is completed the historian will know what papers are available to him and where, and he will have some idea of what he must look for to complete his history.

The second group, "The Ad Hoc Committee for the Preservation of Labor Records," chaired by Robert Hill of the New York Public Library is encouraging institutions which have facilities and staff, to take a more active role in the preservation of labor records. The Committee hopes to act as a clearing house to bring unions and institutions together. To aid both groups, the committee is preparing a guide to the types of records which should be saved and how they should be arranged.

The new "Labor History" which is being published by Tamiment Institute will also be helpful. Articles about labor records and histories written from them should encourage more unions to deposit papers where they will be used.

Labor need not feel self-conscious about its failure to preserve its records of the past. As a nation we have been slow to recognize the value of historical records. Our National Archives is only a little over 20 years old. Business archives are an even more recent development, often being started when a history of the company is contemplated. If labor, too, will take the steps recommended by its national organization, the historians could provide us with a meaningful history of the past on which to build a better future. "What is past is prologue."

Leone W. Eckert
Records Librarian
New York State School of
Industrial and Labor Relations

NATIONAL LABOR MUSEUM

The AFL-CIO News of February 20, 1960, carried the following news item:

"The AFL-CIO Executive Council has voted to explore the possibility of establishing a Labor Hall of Fame or National Labor Museum in Washington.

"The Council acted on the recommendation of the Community Service Committee which noted that 'there is no single place in this country where the history of the labor movement and the stories of the men and women who built it can be

found by the scholar, the student, the union member or the interested citizen."

LABOR HISTORY, VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

The first issue of a scholarly new journal, Labor History, published by the Tamiment Institute, appeared in February. Labor History will be issued three times yearly, at an annual subscription price of \$4.00, and may be ordered from the Institute, 7 East 15th Street, New York 3, New York.

The high quality of the articles appearing in the first issue, and the usefulness of the proposed directory of labor history materials, to begin in the next issue, merit the enthusiastic review which appear in the Library Journal, April 1, 1960, p. 1448.

Librarians of labor history collections may have met one of the current issue's authors, Archie Green. Mr. Green, a Fellow in the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois, and recently awarded a master's degree in Library Science by Illinois, has just completed a lecture tour taking him to Roosevelt College, Rutgers, Cornell, and other labor history centers.

Librarians at the Detroit Public Library enjoyed meeting Mr. Green when he stopped to see their John Creer labor collection.

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ALA-CLA CONFERENCE IN MONTREAL

The 1960 conference of the American and Canadian Library Associations will be held in Montreal June 20 through June 24, 1960.

At an open meeting on Thursday, June 23, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. the Joint Committee will present a panel of labor educators and librarians, representing both Canada and the United States, in a discussion of the topic, "What Can Libraries in the United States and Canada Do to Serve Labor Unions More Effectively?"

Following the panel, discussion will center on audience experience in library-labor cooperation. Chairman Dorothy Kuhn Oko urges you to attend the open meeting and be prepared to contribute accounts of your own successes and failures in the field.

A luncheon business meeting, in Salon A, Sheraton-Mt. Royal, at 12 noon the same day, is set for committee members.

Other meetings of interest, including that sponsored by the ASD on Library Service to an Aging Population, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, will be described in the May ALA Bulletin.

THE CANADIAN LABOR MOVEMENT

Joint Committee members attending the convention may be interested in a rapid survey of the Canadian labor movement:

About one-third of Canada's paid workers, just under $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, are members of 167 unions. Seventy per cent of these union members belong to international unions, that is, unions operating in both Canada and the United States. The largest unions are the Steelworkers (80,000) Carpenters (76,000) Autoworkers (60,000) Machinists (53,000) and Woodworkers (42,000). Teamsters, Railway and Transport Workers Brotherhood, Pulp and Paper Mill Workers, Public Employees, and Mine-Mill have roughly 35,000 members each.

As in the United States, Canadian labor was split for nearly two decades, merging, in 1956, into the present Canadian Labor Congress with headquarters in Ottawa.

Casual readers of the labor press will probably have two associations with Canadian labor: the Rand formula, and the Smallwood-Woodworkers labor fracas.

The Rand formula, developed in a 1946 arbitration award following a 99-day strike at Ford Motor of Canada, provides among other points that all workers covered by a union agreement shall have their dues checked off, whether or not they become members of the union. The agency shop in Right-to-Work states, is a similar arrangement.

The Smallwood-Woodworkers episode occurred in the province of Newfoundland in early 1959 when the International Woodworkers went on strike to enforce a Conciliation Board recommendation of 5¢ per hour wage increase and reduction of hours from 60 to 54 weekly. Thereupon Liberal Premier Joseph R. Smallwood persuaded the provincial legislature to enact laws which decertified IWA as the bargaining agent for the loggers concerned and virtually gave the government authority to outlaw certain unions in the province.

Though Canadians in international unions are commonly thought to be dominated by their American brothers, each group has much autonomy. For example, the Teamsters and the International Longshoremens are, and have been since its formation, affiliated with the Canadian Labor Congress. The International Union of Operating Engineers and the American Federation of Technical Engineers, however, despite their membership in the AFL-CIO, were expelled by the CLC in April, 1958.

Canadian unions exercise complete independence in matters of legislation, foreign affairs, and political action, and, in fact, stand committed, by CLC action of 1958, to work toward formation of a new political party. "The time has come for a fundamental realignment of political forces in Canada. There is the need for a broadly based people's political movement, which embraces the CCF, the Labor Movement, farm organizations, professional people, and other liberally-minded persons interested in basic social reform and reconstruction through our parliamentary system of government." So read, in part, a resolution adopted at the last CLC convention.

Industrial Relations in Canada, written by Stuart Jamieson, and published by the Cornell University Press in 1957, is, despite a critical review in the current Industrial and Labor Relations Review, the best recent account of the Canadian labor movement. Claude Jodoin, president of the CLC, discusses "Foreign Influence and

Canadian Unions," in the December, 1959, issue of Canadian Labour. Statistical data on Canadian unions is available in each issue of the Canadian Labour Gazette and in the yearly Canada Yearbook, which was the source for membership figures given above.

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FROM THE LABOR PRESS

The AFL-CIO News of March 19, 1960, reviews the new publication, Songs of Work and Freedom, compiled by Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer. It is for sale at \$2.00 (soft cover) and \$5.00 (hard cover) by the Labor Education Division of Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan, Chicago 5, Illinois.

Detroiters enjoyed reading "Eagle Scout Spends a Day Studying Detroit Labor," written by their own Hal De Long and appearing in the AFL-CIO Education News and Views of March-April, 1960.

The New York Public Library's display, "What Do You Know About Labor?" has been described in words (Advance, February 15, 1960) and in pictures (AFL-CIO News, March 19, 1960). A story of the display, Mrs. Oko, and the New York Public Library's Labor Education Service, "A Library, a Lady, and Labor," employs both words and pictures to excellent effect; it appears in The Catering Industry Employee, April, 1960.

Librarians hoping to cooperate with university industrial relations programs will acquire background by reading Fred K. Koehler's article, "A University Reports on Labor Education," appearing in the March, 1960, American Federationist.

The newest magazine in the labor education field is Labor Education Viewpoints, issued by Workers Education Local no. 189. It is available from Holgate Young, 6313 West Holbert Road, Bethesda 14, Maryland, and sells to nonmembers for 50¢ per issue. A lengthy description of Viewpoints appears in the American Teacher of January, 1960.

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Committee Members

Mrs. Dorothy Kuhn Oko, Labor Education Specialist, The New York Public Library,
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The opinions expressed in this NEWSLETTER do not necessarily represent the policy
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Division, ALA.